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THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE

VOL. XXII. — JANUARY-MARCH, 1909. — No. LXXXIII

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN ALGONKINS¹

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IN attempting to make a comparative study of the myths of the various tribes belonging to the Central and Eastern Algonkins, a serious difficulty presents itself at the outset. This difficulty consists in the fact that the record is very incomplete, for our knowledge of the mythology of most of the tribes considered is far from being thorough, and the character of the information from different tribes is very varied. From some, as the Micmac, Abnaki, Ojibwa, and Fox, a considerable mass and variety of tales are known; but from others, as the Pottawatami, only a small amount of material is at hand, and that wholly relating to the culture-hero. In spite, however, of the inadequacy of the data available at present, results of some interest may be obtained by a careful comparison.

Such a comparison may be made in various ways. We may, for example, consider the matter only from the numerical point of view, and determine the proportional number of incidents which the various tribes hold in common, each with each. We may add to this a consideration of the class or type of incident thus shared. Or we may make a special study of a group of incidents, such as those clustering about the culture-hero and his brother. Or, again, we may note the distribution within the area involved, of certain particular incidents which have wide affiliations elsewhere. All of these methods lead to results which are of value.

For purposes of convenience, the Algonkin tribes here discussed may be divided into four geographical groups, — a Western, comprising the western Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa, Menomini, Pottawatami, and Fox; a Central, made up of the Mississagua and Ottawa; an Eastern, including the Micmac, Abnaki, and Maliseet; and a Northeastern, including the Nenenot or Nascopi of Labrador and the Montagnais.²

¹ Address of the retiring President, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society in Baltimore, December 30, 1908.

² In this grouping, the term "Ojibwa" includes the portion of the tribe now and for many years resident in the United States, the myth material being mainly that

Beginning with the mere numerical comparison, and taking the Western group first, it appears that their mythologies are closely related to one another, each tribe sharing with the other members of the group by far the majority of its myth incidents. The two most closely allied are the Saukteaux and Menomini, each having with the other a larger number of agreements than with any other single tribe. The Cree find their closest affiliation with the Ojibwa, and also have much in common with the Saukteaux-Menomini pair just spoken of. Although the Cree, Saukteaux, and Menomini do not show any very close analogy to the eastern Algonkins, the Ojibwa, on the contrary, does, having a larger number of correspondences with the Micmac than with any single tribe in its own or Western group. Next to this eastern affiliation, however, it shows its closest relations to the Cree and Menomini. The Fox has most in common with the Ojibwa and Menomini, but shows, like the Ojibwa, a notable number of incidents similar to those of the Micmac and Abnaki, in each case a larger number than with either the Cree or Saukteaux.

With the tribes of the Central group, the affiliations of these Western tribes are strong, more noticeable with the Mississagua than with the Ottawa. With the Northeastern group, the only one to show any considerable similarity is the Cree.

The relations of the members of the Western group to the Huron-Iroquois may next be considered. The Ojibwa, it will be remembered, were conspicuous in showing the closest approach to the Eastern Algonkins, and they are equally so in the number of agreements which they show with the Iroquoian tribes, showing a somewhat greater degree of similarity with the Iroquois proper than with the Wyandot-Huron. The Fox come next in the number of Iroquoian affiliations, while the Pottawatami present the curious situation of having more in common with the Iroquoian peoples than with the Algonkins taken all together. This seeming anomaly is due, probably, to the fact that the Pottawatami material known to me relates only to the culture-hero.

The Central group comprises the Mississagua and Ottawa, and shows, as a whole, strong affiliations with the Western group. Curiously, the Mississagua and Ottawa show less agreement with each other than each does with the Western tribes. Little similarity seems to exist with the Eastern group; the Ottawa, however, having a greater agreement in this case than the Mississagua, although the latter is most closely related to the Ojibwa, whose closest affiliation was with the Micmac. The Cen-

obtained by Schoolcraft. This is separated — perhaps with but little justification — from the Saukteaux, who, while a portion of the same tribe, are the Canadian branch living on reservations to the northeast of Lake Winnipeg. The Mississagua, although again a sub-tribe of the Ojibwa, are treated separately, as they occupied the region east of the Sault, and seem to present enough differences from the other portions of the tribe to warrant individual attention.

tral group shows nothing in common with the Northeastern. With Iroquoian tribes, the Ottawa presents most incidents in common, and, as might be expected, with the Huron rather than with the Iroquois.

The members of the Eastern group — comprising the Micmac, Abnaki, and Maleseet — show a strong agreement among themselves, as might be expected, the Maleseet agreeing rather more closely with the Abnaki than with the Micmac. With the Central group there is little in common, and Micmac and Abnaki do not differ much in the degree of their similarity to the two Central tribes. With the Western group the affiliation is much stronger, and lies almost wholly with the Ojibwa, Menomini, and Fox. There is, moreover, a great difference in respect to this agreement as between the Micmac and Abnaki, the former showing twice as many incidents in common with the Western tribes as the latter. With the Northeastern group no considerable similarities have been noted.

The Iroquoian agreements which the tribes of the Eastern group show are, on the whole, somewhat stronger with the Iroquois than with the Wyandot-Huron, and the Micmac has slightly more such common incidents than the Abnaki, as many indeed as it has with the Fox or Menomini of the Western group.

The material from the Northeastern tribes is almost wholly from the Nenenot or Nascopi, and this shows a predominant similarity with the Cree and Western group.

In considering the affiliations of the various tribes and groups thus far, account has been taken merely of the relationship as shown by the total number of incidents held in common. These incidents are, however, of two classes, — those relating to the culture-hero and having a place in the cycle of tales which cluster about him; and, on the other hand, all other incidents. From the previous merely numerical comparisons, it appeared that the Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa, Menomini, and Fox formed a well-marked group, having each with the others a majority of elements in common. Examining now the classes of incidents represented, it appears that primary importance must be given to those incidents relating to the culture-hero, the number of these found in common being larger than those of the other class. In some cases, indeed, they are the only features which show similarity, as for instance between the Cree and Saulteaux, or the Saulteaux and Fox.

The results of a study of these incidents may be best discussed by considering each of the various tribes briefly in its relations to the others within and without the group. The Cree thus exhibits a closer agreement in the culture-hero elements with the Saulteaux and Menomini than with the Ojibwa, agreeing least of all in this respect with the Fox. Outside the culture-hero incidents, however, the position is nearly reversed, for with the Ojibwa it shows fourteen common incidents,

whereas with the Menomini it has but three, and with the Saulteaux none. With the Fox it shows the same degree of similarity as with the Menomini. Thus Cree resembles the Saulteaux-Menomini most in its culture-hero myths, the Ojibwa most in all others. The Saulteaux shows a close agreement with the Menomini in both culture-hero and other elements, and has the same non-culture-hero incidents in common with it as with the Cree and Ojibwa. With the Fox the only points of contact are those relating to the culture-hero. The Ojibwa has, as just stated, beside the culture-hero incidents, a large number of others in common with the Cree. Its relation to Menomini is similar; but whereas the culture-hero incidents common to Ojibwa and Cree, and Ojibwa and Menomini are for the most part the same, the non-culture-hero elements are almost entirely different in the two cases. With the Fox, there are more non-culture-hero agreements than in those relating to the culture-hero, and a considerable number are again different from those in common either with the Cree or the Menomini. In regard to the Menomini, it is only necessary to point out that in so far as the non-culture-hero incidents are concerned, it shows one set with the Cree-Saulteaux-Ojibwa, but has a wholly different set in common with the Fox. The Fox, lastly, has only culture-hero incidents in common with the Saulteaux, while the non-culture-hero elements it has in common with the Cree-Ojibwa are almost wholly different from those with the Menomini.

In their affiliations with the other Algonkin tribes, a number of points may be noted. Cree shows no resemblance to the Ottawa outside the culture-hero class, although with Mississagua it has several such similarities. With the Eastern group it has few not relating to the culture-hero, and a similar condition is found relative to the Northeastern tribes. Saulteaux shows no agreements with the Central group outside the culture-hero class, and with the Eastern group but a single incident. The Ojibwa shows agreement with the Central group in both classes; but it may be noted, that, with one exception, the non-culture-hero elements held in common are different in the case of the Ottawa from that of the Mississagua. It will be remembered that the Ojibwa showed, on merely numerical grounds, very strong resemblances to the Micmac. It appears that these agreements lie almost wholly in the incidents having nothing to do with the culture-hero cycle, and that but few of the latter are found alike in the two tribes. About half of the incidents common to Ojibwa and Micmac appear to be typical Eastern incidents, and do not occur among any other Western tribe. The remainder are found also among either the Central group or the Iroquois, or, in two cases, in one other Western tribe. The Ojibwa similarity to the Eastern group lies thus almost wholly outside the culture-hero class, and to a large extent the common incidents are found among the Western tribes only in the Ojibwa. The Fox is in a somewhat similar position, in that

its agreement with the Central and particularly the Eastern group are nearly all outside the culture-hero cycle, but the incidents which it thus shares are mainly different from those which the Ojibwa shares with the Eastern group. Thus the Ojibwa and Micmac have in common the "bungling host," "cold driven away by heat," "disobedience punished," "the obliging ferryman," "freezing-test," "magic growth of attendant animals," "Orpheus and Eurydice," and "thrown-away;" whereas Fox and the Eastern group have in common the "bungling host," "the heat test," "rolling skull," "trail shortened," "water from belly," "Atalanta flight," and the Symplegades. The Menomini finally shows relationship with the Central group mainly in its culture-hero incidents, but in relation to the Eastern group agrees with the Ojibwa and Fox, in that the similarities are mainly outside this class of incident. In brief, then, it appears that the Western tribes which show similarity to the Eastern Algonkins do so mainly in those elements outside the culture-hero class, and that the Ojibwa and Fox, which show the strongest Eastern agreements, have different elements in common in each case.

The Central group may be dismissed in a few words. The Ottawa shows the greatest agreement with the Eastern tribes outside the culture-hero class. The Mississagua has little or nothing in common with either type. The relationships of the Eastern and Western groups have already been discussed. The Northeastern shows more similarities with both Western and Eastern outside the culture-hero type than within it, the culture-hero agreements being fewer with the Eastern than with the Western tribes.

Something may be said in regard to the Iroquoian similarities. Cree shows in its few correspondences both classes of incidents, those relating to the culture-hero being in the minority. *Saulteaux* reverses this, having little in common except culture-hero elements. The Ojibwa is like the Cree, and the Fox is largely the same, but several of the incidents are quite typically Iroquoian. Menomini is largely like Ojibwa, but lacks the characteristic Iroquoian elements found in the Fox. Of the Central group, the Ottawa shows a wider range of agreement than does the Mississagua. The Eastern Algonkins exhibit a wide range of agreement, but are notable for the prominence of several culture-hero elements which are typically Iroquoian.

In the mythology of the Algonkin tribes, the cycle of myths which centres about the twin brothers may be said to be of greatest importance. In discussing the relation of these various tribes in so far as their myths are concerned, this cycle is of especial value, and deserves separate consideration. Professor Chamberlain in 1891, in a paper read before this Society, made comparisons between some of the members of the Western and Central groups, but did not include the Eastern or Northeastern tribes, or the Iroquois. It is of course true, that it is at times difficult to

say what shall be considered a part of this class of tales, as what in one tribe is told of the culture-hero may in another be attached to a different personage. For convenience, however, I have treated all incidents which are habitually attributed to the culture-hero by any tribe, as culture-hero incidents. There is, moreover, the further difficulty that various versions of a tale within the same tribe may vary considerably in the number and character of incidents included, and in such cases I have taken all incidents in all the various versions.

At the outset we may divide the whole mass of these tales into two parts, — those which form a more or less connected series recounting the birth and adventures of the two brothers, ending with the deluge and the re-creation of the world; and, on the other hand, those other tales which recount the exploits of the culture-hero alone, some of which are of the trickster type.

Taking first this more or less connected cycle, we may separate it, for purposes of comparisons, into four portions, — the origin and birth of the hero and his brother or brothers; the brother's death; the deluge; and the re-creation of the world. As a whole, the cycle as told shows two contrasting forms, an Eastern and a Western. Considering the latter of these, it is evident, that so far as the first part of the cycle is concerned, there is considerable variation. The Ojibwa, Menomini, Pottawatami, and Ottawa have in common the two incidents of the virgin or abnormal birth and the death of the mother. These features are lacking in the Fox, while there are no tales relative to the origin of the culture-hero given from the Cree or Saukteaux. While the Ojibwa, Menomini, and Ottawa agree in there being but two brothers, Fox and Pottawatami both speak of four. Menomini and Ottawa agree in associating the younger brother with the wolf, whereas the former stands alone in having one of the brothers die at birth, to be later resuscitated as a companion for the other. The most noteworthy difference, however, in this first portion of the cycle, lies in the appearance among the Pottawatami and Ottawa of the Flintman as one of the brothers; of his opposition and enmity to the culture-hero; and final destruction by the latter, as a result of what may be called the "deceitful confidence." These various elements are typically Iroquoian, and are found most fully developed, apparently, among the Wyandot-Huron.

The second part of the cycle also shows variety. Among the Menomini and Pottawatami, the Ojibwa and Ottawa, the culture-hero's brother is killed by evil water-frequenting manitous, when the brother, neglecting his elder brother's warning, crosses a lake on the ice. The Menomini and Pottawatami agree in the return of the brother in the form of a ghost, and in his departure westward to be the guardian of the land of the dead. These elements do not appear in the Ojibwa or Ottawa, however. A somewhat different combination appears in the Fox, where the

incident of the lake does not occur, the manitous killing the culture-hero's brother, after decoying him away to a distance. The incident of the ghost's return is, however, present. The affiliation of the Cree-Saulteaux in this portion of the cycle is again unknown, for lack of any data.

For the third part there is fuller material, as, although the incidents are not available from the Pottawatami, both Cree and Saulteaux may here be taken count of. As far as regards the incident of the "bird informant," Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa, and Fox stand together. In the "stump disguise" and the wounding of the manitous, all are in accord except the Fox, which has here the unique incident of the floating spider-web. The Menomini has also a special incident in the introduction of the ball-game. In the impersonation of the Frog shaman by the culture-hero, and his subsequent completion of the revenge by killing the manitous, all are in accord except the Ottawa, which lacks this incident. All in all, the Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa, and Menomini are in closest agreement in this part of the cycle.

In the essential elements of the deluge, the escape from it, the "earth-diver," and the reconstruction of the world, all the tribes are in substantial accord. The Menomini-Ojibwa alone have the incident of the stretching tree, and the Cree-Ojibwa alone tell of the measuring of the new earth by the wolf. Taken as a whole, all the members of the Western and Central groups form a fairly accordant body. The Fox, having several unique features, stands somewhat apart, as does the Pottawatami, by reason of its strong Iroquoian element.

Turning now to the Eastern tribes, it appears at a glance that there is little in common with the tribes just discussed. There is here the incident of the abnormal birth, but this is also found among the Iroquois and widely elsewhere. Among the Abnaki there is the association of the culture-hero's brother with the wolf, but all the remainder of the cycle is missing. The only other points of contact with the cycle as described lie in the opposition of the two brothers, and the slaying of one by the other as a result of the "deceitful confidence." These incidents are, however, typically Iroquoian, and are found only in the Ottawa and Pottawatami farther West. Practically, therefore, we may say that the cycle found in fairly accordant form through the West is here wholly lacking.

In a consideration of the other incidents relating to the culture-hero, we unfortunately have little information relating to the Pottawatami or the tribes of the Central group, and must thus confine the comparisons largely to the other Western tribes and those of the East. Of incidents not falling into the connected cycle just discussed, there are about eighteen, an investigation of whose distribution reveals the following points. About half of these, including such as the "hoodwinked dancers," "stolen feast," "rolling rock," "body punished," "reflection deceives," "tree holds prisoner," and "sun-trap," are common to a group composed

of the Cree, Saukteaux, Fox, and Menomini, the Ojibwa having but three out of eight. The other half, including the "wolf companions," Jonah, Hippogrif, "caught by the head," "visit to the culture-hero," and "bungling host," are common to the group made up of the Saukteaux, Ojibwa, Fox, and Menomini. In other words, the Saukteaux-Menomini-Fox have a series of about eighteen incidents in common, one half of which are also found among the Cree, and the other half among the Ojibwa.

With the Eastern group there is almost as slight an agreement in this class of incidents as in the connected cycle. Four incidents only are found to agree,—the "hoodwinked dancers," "rolling rock," "visit to the culture-hero," and "bungling host." The latter, at least, is of such very wide distribution that its importance in this case may be regarded as slight.

An extensive comparison of the incidents found among the Algonkins here described, with those of other tribes, such as those in the Plains, the Southwest, or the Pacific Coast, has not been made, but a few general statements may be made. The connected cycle of incidents seems to be quite clearly typical of the tribes living near the Great Lakes. We find the greater part of it among the Blackfeet, although lacking among the Arapaho and Cheyenne, showing either the longer residence of these latter tribes in the Plains, or their greater impressibility to the mythology of the Plains type. A portion appears among the Siouan tribes, where it occurs in the Iowa and Omaha. The other disconnected tales of the culture-hero cannot, however, be regarded as very distinctive. Many of the incidents, such as the "bungling host," are of very wide distribution over the whole continent; and others, although not so widely spread, still are found among a large number of tribes outside this area.

From the foregoing study of the incidents in the mythology of the Eastern Algonkin tribes, a few general conclusions may be drawn. The Cree, Saukteaux, and Menomini form a closely related group, with which the Mississagua shows much in common. The Ojibwa stands somewhat apart, being connected with the group, and particularly with the Cree, largely by its culture-hero elements, and showing a strong similarity to the Eastern group of the Micmac, Abnaki, and Maleseet in so far as regards the non-culture-hero elements. It also has more affiliations with the Iroquoian tribes than any other in the whole Western group. Fox and Pottawatami, although closely agreeing with the group of the Cree-Saukteaux-Menomini in so far as the connected cycle of culture-hero incidents goes, yet present sufficient differences to make it necessary to regard them as forming a separate subdivision. The Eastern tribes make up a pretty coherent group, for the most part unrelated to the Western, in which, however, the Micmac stands out markedly, by reason of its strong similarities to Western, particularly Ojibwa, elements. The

Pottawatami and Ottawa have both incorporated in their cycle of culture-hero tales the typical Iroquoian incidents relating to Flintman, many of which have also found place among the Eastern tribes.

These various results are, it would seem, corroborated and partially explained by the history of the various tribes. Although the Menomini were in historical times close to the Pottawatamis in northern Wisconsin, they appear to have lived earlier on the southern side of the Sault in the northern peninsula of Michigan, being thus in close proximity to the Saulteaux and Ojibwa, with whom their closest affiliations have been found to exist. The Pottawatami and Fox, on the other hand, were immigrants in the region west of Lake Michigan. By tradition they had come from the eastern side of the lake, the former presumably around its southern end, as the Pottawatami formerly occupied much of southern Michigan. This brings them in contact with the Neutrals and other tribes of Iroquoian stock about the western end of Lake Erie, which would seem to explain the appearance of the Iroquoian Flintman incidents in their mythology. The Ottawa were in the seventeenth century closely allied with the Hurons, and the Iroquoian similarities noted may thus reasonably be accounted for.

The eastern affiliations of the Ojibwa may perhaps be explained as follows. Traditionally the Ojibwa had moved west, from a position much farther to the east, and north of the St. Lawrence; this would bring them closer to the Micmac geographically, with whom, and not with the Abnaki, their agreements are found. A further point worth noting is the slight degree of similarity existing between the Labrador Algonkins and the Micmac, who were their neighbors in historic times at least, on the south side of the St. Lawrence. It has been thought by some that the Micmac came to their historic positions from the north or northwest, but so far as mythology is any guide, this conclusion seems unfounded, and everything points to a different series of affiliations and line of migration.

As stated at the outset, conclusions based on material at hand relating to Algonkin mythology are somewhat premature, data being wholly lacking for many tribes, and for some being too meagre and too much restricted in character to be satisfactory. Nevertheless I believe such an attempt is helpful, if it does no more than call attention to the gaps in our knowledge, and induce students to try to procure sufficient material to make such comparisons of lasting worth.

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